

LETTERS TO THE STAR

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Dulles Quoted

Although I was critical of the policies of the late Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, I believe his War, Peace and Change book published 20 years ago is timeless wisdom.

In it he inveighs against "that form of patriotism which personifies the Nation as a living being endowed with heroic qualities, who lives bravely and dangerously in a world of inferior and even villainous other nation personalities."

To build up the desired personification "history, in each nation, is written and taught in the manner of a dime novel . . . and is kept up to date by the current utterances of political leaders and by the press." By printed word or by pictures selected to produce an emotional reaction private agencies "magnify incidents out of all relation to their actual importance and they induce unreliable generalizations."

There are many possible types of the nation-hero, but Mr. Dulles says that two of them are the most conducive to war: "The crusading hero, who champions the cause of justice and succors the oppressed . . . and the nation-hero who is sensitive of his personal honor and who is quick to strike out in case of actual or seeming affronts." Alas, that Mr. Dulles did so much to build up these nation-hero and nation-villain concepts while he was Secretary of State!

He urged checking the tendency to identify one's personified state with deity and the tendency to identify the other-nation personality with evil, increasing elasticity, not permitting human action to be dictated by emotion to the virtual exclusion of reason, not making mass effort and sacrifice dependent on the ideology of conflict, eliminating force as the solvent of conflicting desires.

Is all this not the gospel needed now when the only two alternatives are coexistence and no existence?

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